



MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN 21-02
September 23, 2002

***Port Condition Whiskey Set for
Houston-Galveston - T/S ISIDORE***

The U. S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port has set Port Condition Whiskey for the ports of Houston, Galveston, Freeport and Texas City. Although temporarily weakened and downgraded as a Tropical Storm over the Yucatan Peninsula, the current forecast calls for the storm to strengthen in the Gulf of Mexico to Hurricane conditions, and proceed North toward the Gulf Coast. Gale force winds from Tropical Storm Isidore are possible along the coast of Texas within 72 hours. Because of the length of time this storm has been in the Gulf of Mexico already, sea conditions may restrict the movement of vessels in and out of the port well ahead of the arrival of high winds.

The Captain of the Port has established a safety zone for the following areas:

The MSO Houston-Galveston Captain of the Port zone as defined in 33 CFR 3.40-28 to include the ports of Houston, Galveston, Freeport and Texas City and all surrounding navigable waterways.

To enter, transit or remain within this safety zone, vessels must comply with the following requirements:

1. Report Intentions to Marine Safety Office Houston-Galveston. All commercial vessels and ocean-going barges greater than 500 gross tons must advise the Captain of the Port of their intent to remain in port or depart. If intending to remain in port, all vessels must complete and submit "Remaining in Port Checklist" for approval by 1200, 24 SEP 2002. Checklist can be obtained by visiting the MSO Houston-Galveston website at <http://www.uscg.mil/d8/mso/hougal/inport.htm> or calling (713) 671-5100 (ext. 0). The Checklist must be faxed to the COTP, at Marine Safety Office Houston-

Galveston at (713) 671-5177. It is anticipated that Marine Safety Unit Galveston will be evacuated from their normal office space and representatives will be assembled at MSO Houston-Galveston to review checklists from Galveston, Texas City and Freeport.

2. Closure of Departure/Arrival Windows. Ocean-going ships and barges over 500 gross tons departing the port must depart no later than 12 hours prior to the arrival of gale force winds. Vessels bound for COTP Houston-Galveston Zone ports, which are unable to arrive 12 hours prior to the arrival of gale force winds are advised to seek an alternate destination.
3. Cargo Operations/Bunkering. All transfer operations shall cease upon arrival of sustained 40 mph winds. All vessels intending to leave port and requiring bunkers shall plan accordingly to ensure preparations for departure are complete by 12 hours prior to the arrival of gale force winds from the storm.
4. Smaller Commercial Vessels Not Restricted by Draft. Smaller commercial vessels not restricted by draft, including fishing vessels, are asked to seek shelter outside the deep draft shipping channels and turning areas.

The COTP anticipates setting the following Port Conditions in advance of the arrival of Tropical Storm Isidore:

CONDITION X-Ray:

Within 48 hours of gale force winds from Tropical Storm Isidore making landfall.

Future Port Conditions are set contingent upon the storm's course and speed. Should the hurricane increase in speed, anticipate that conditions may be set sooner.

Questions or comments regarding this bulletin should be directed to the Marine Safety Office Command Duty Officer or Hurricane Officer at (713) 671-5100 (ext. 0).

E. W. Parsons
Commander, U.S. Coast Guard
Alternate Captain of the Port